

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [005] with the following amended paragraph:

[005] Eventually, it became know for postage meters to communicate directly with a data center for both postage funds refills and rate downloads. See, for example, U.S. Patents Nos. 4,122,532, 5,729,460, 5,448,641 and 5,309,363. When postage meters began to communicate directly with a data center, information stored in the postage meters, for example, meter usage, was uploaded to the data center. This collection of postage meter information at the data center is commonly referred to as data capture. See, for example, U.S. Patents Nos. 4,752,950, 4,873,645, 5,072,401 and 6,463,133, ~~643,133~~.

Please replace paragraph [008] with the following amended paragraph:

[008] Various forms of networked postage metering systems are known. See, for example, U.S. Patents Nos. 6,151,591, 6,151,590, ~~6,138,108~~, 6,098,058, 6,085,181 and 6,081,795. Pitney Bowes Inc. of Stamford, Connecticut, recently introduced a series of digital mailing products referred to as DM Series machines featuring INTELLILINK™ ~~IntelliLink™~~, which is an intelligent, network architecture that provides a "gateway" to a suite of mail services and applications.

Please replace paragraph [036] with the following amended paragraph:

[036] Once inducted into the mail stream, the Post infrastructure begins to process the mail piece at step 122. At step 124, during the processing by various equipment and personnel within the Post infrastructure, a determination is made whether the mail piece is at a control point. Control points are any systems that detect or scan the mail piece or its container. Examples of control points include postal processing scanners, mailer's processing system, recipient's processing system or the postal carrier. If not, the processing continues at step 122. If yes, then at step 126, the Post infrastructure obtains information from a planned event database. If it is determined, at step 128, that this is a planned event then at step 130, the infrastructure obtains mail piece information using sensors on the infrastructure process the mail at the control point. At step 132, the infrastructure makes note of the system information corresponding to the control point. At step 134, the infrastructure applies a decision function based on the control information read from the mail piece. At step 136, the infrastructure applies an actuator associated with the decision function. At step 138, the infrastructure constructs one or more event messages indicating the decision function and actuator applied. At step 140, the infrastructure sends the message to the meter through the Provider infrastructure. At step 144, the meter decides on whether a change is desired based on the message received at 142. This decision preferably is made based on an interactive input by the mailer to the meter. However, the meter can be configured to default to preset decisions at the discretion of the mailer. If no change is required, a message is returned from the meter to the Post infrastructure (through the Provider infrastructure) that no change is required and, at step 122, processing continues. If a change is required, then at step 146 the decision function and event list are modified and a message is sent to the Post infrastructure indicating this, and, at step 122, processing continues. If it is determined, at step 128, that this is not a planned event then the Post infrastructure begins processing the next mail piece at step 122.

Please replace paragraph [040] with the following amended paragraph:

[040] Feedback of information related to services delivered and to payment or refund for services is provided to the meter from a data center, such as the Provider's data center. Referring now to Fig. 5, the Post, at step 500, obtains the information during its normal processing of the mail, for example, as the mail is processed through sorting equipment. At step 510, the Post then sends the information about mail, which was evidenced by a particular meter, to a data center that administers the postage account of that particular meter. The information may be sent in various known electronic forms of communication, including to an e-mail account assigned to the particular meter, such as MeterNumber@pb.com. At step 520, the data center then forwards the information to the meter after making any required database entries and performing any required data checking. At step 530, the meter then acts on the received information by sorting it, alerting the mailer to any exceptions, refunds and payments due and displaying the information. At step ~~520~~540, the meter completes the accounting for the resulting transactions. The system allows for automatic metering of payment in cases where the final price depends on information not available at the time of mail production. Alternatively, any accounting adjustments could be made by the Provider infrastructure.